

REMARKS

The above amendment and these remarks are responsive to the Office Action of Examiner Florian M. Zeender mailed 01/27/2005.

Claims 2-4, 6-10, 19, and 21-22 are pending in the instant application. By this amendment, claims 1, 11-18, 20, and 23 are cancelled without prejudice, and claims 2-3, 6, 8-10, 19, and 21-22 are amended. Entry of this amendment is respectfully requested.

These amendments are being made so as to facilitate early allowance of the presently claimed subject matter. Applicants do not acquiesce in the correctness of the rejections, and reserve the right to present specific arguments regarding any rejected claims not specifically addressed. Further, Applicants reserve the right to pursue the full scope of the subject matter of the original claims in subsequent patent application(s) that claim priority to the instant application. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants' representative expresses appreciation for the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter. Claims 3-4, 6-7, and 21-22 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if re-written in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 3 so as to present claim 3 in an independent format that incorporates all of the limitations of base claim 1. Claim 4 depends upon allowable claim 3, and is therefore also allowable.

Claim 6 has been amended so as to present claim 6 in an independent format that incorporates all of the limitations of base claim 1. Claim 7 depends upon allowable claim 6, and is therefore also allowable.

Claim 19 has been amended so as to incorporate all of the limitations of allowable claim 3 in a Beauregard claim format, and is therefore also allowable.

Claim 21 has been amended so as to present claim 21 in an independent format that incorporates all of the limitations of base claim 20. Claim 22 depends upon allowable claim 21, and is therefore also allowable. Claims 2 and 8-10 have been amended so as to depend on allowable claim 21, and are therefore also allowable.

Accordingly, all claims pending in the instant application, i.e. claims 2-4, 6-10, 19, and 21-22, are allowable. Pursuant to MPEP 2143.03, "If an independent claim is nonobvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious." In *re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988).

Inasmuch as all rejected claims have been cancelled, amended so as to be made allowable, or amended so as to depend on an allowable claim, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw any remaining rejections or objections, and allow the instant application.

CONCLUSION

The instant application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action by the Examiner is urged. Should differences remain, however, which do not place one/more of the remaining claims in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to phone the undersigned at the number provided below for the purpose of providing constructive assistance and suggestions in accordance with M.P.E.P. Sections 707.02(j) and 707.03 in order that allowable claims can be presented, thereby placing the application in condition for allowance without further proceedings being necessary.

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